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Document Control

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The current status of this document is **FINAL**

Document History

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<thead>
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<th>Comment</th>
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<td>Additional content added and comments from NIGALA reviewed</td>
</tr>
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<td>28.02.14</td>
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Strategy Introduction and Context

Introduction

The Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) is committed to encouraging the professional development of all staff by promoting a culture of learning linked to its overall mission statement, directly related to the achievement of its objectives and relevant to the individual’s present or foreseeable work responsibilities. This strategy has been created for the period of 2014 - 2016 to align with the DHSSPS Personal Social Services Development and Training Strategy timeline to allow for the implementation and absorption of any learning or revisions that may arise from the evaluation of this strategy.

It is important to note that this strategy is a fluid document and may be subject to change in line with any political or environmental changes in order to facilitate a flexible approach in responding to staff learning and development needs.

Internal Drivers

NIGALA Business Plan

The 2014/ 2015 NIGALA Business Plan highlights learning and development as one of its key strategic objectives for the forthcoming year with particular focus on:

- Strengthening corporate leadership towards good governance
- Engagement in learning initiatives to support service improvement and practice development
- Action planning to address diversity issues in service delivery
- Knowledge transfer to improve practice through learning from others and through research
- Promoting staff safety, health and wellbeing
- Enhancement of ICT to support service improvement and efficiency
External Drivers

UK wide
Publications and organisations in the wider UK can provide information and direction for those working within HSCNI such as:

- *The Francis Report* and the later *Berwick Review* highlighted key themes for the future direction of health such as engaging with patients and the public, building a culture of strong leadership and investing in building capacity in order to develop a ‘patient first’ culture across health

Regional
Local strategy and reviews specifically outline the direction of the service for the impending future:

- *Transforming Your Care* proposes a reshaped model of care for Northern Ireland with the individual at the centre in order to provide a safe, resilient, high quality and sustainable health and social care system for the future.
- *Quality 2020* visualises HSC as an international leader in the excellence of health and social care by the year 2020 through transforming culture to embrace change, strengthening the workforce with the skills and knowledge they require to deliver a high quality service, measuring improvement, raising the standards and integrating care to benefit patients, clients and families.
- The *Social Work Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2022* envisions social workers working to improve and safeguard the social wellbeing of individuals, families and communities by promoting their independence, supporting their social inclusion and participation in society, empowering them to take control of their lives and helping them to keep safe.
- The *Business Services Transformation Programme* is working to transform the way critical business functions in HSCNI organisations is delivered through the use of technology, reviewed processes and organisational improvements in order to modernise and standardise practice.
The nature of these drivers suggests that health and social care is changing and continuously improving. NIGALA will need to develop both a culture which welcomes change and innovation and strong leaders at all levels to support these changes. This can be achieved through strengthening and developing the workforce to enable capacity to deliver.

**Investors in People**

In 2012 Investors in People (iIP) published the Agency’s Post Recognition Review Report which highlighted the following as a current strength within the Agency:

‘A learning and development cycle embedded within the Agency in terms of identification, planning, implementation and first level evaluation’.

The same report also identified a number of potential areas for future focus as follows:

- Creating a new learning and development strategy to provide a framework to identify key factors affecting the workplace and advance knowledge and skills in those areas
- Enhancing the approach to evaluation by ensuring that outcomes from learning and development initiative are reported on and reviewed in the context of the achievement of key performance indicators and the results utilised to inform future strategy and shared with stakeholders
- Considering if new leadership and management competencies need to be defined to enable an adaptive, resilient organisation with high commitment and the capacity to innovate and change

**Staff Engagement Workshops**

Information gathered through staff engagement workshops held by an external facilitator found that:
Professional staff felt that their learning and development was well supported and encouraged but lacked a sense of ‘connectedness’ or ‘follow through’ due to time constraints. Professional staff also placed emphasis on the need for greater sharing of knowledge and experience internally.

Corporate and administrative staff were keen to make better use of the appraisal process in order to provide them with an improved understanding of what learning and development interventions they have access to, and to provide them with a clear and meaningful individual development plan. Corporate and administrative staff feel that they would benefit from the opportunity to learn from and share knowledge with Guardians in order to better align their work and its impact with the work of the Guardian.

**Development of the Strategy**

The development of a Learning and Development Strategy is essential to ensure that the talent that exists within the Agency is being adequately invested in to affect both individual career development and organisational effectiveness.

**Training Needs Analysis**

Information provided by the Quality Assurance and Training Manager gathered through staff appraisals suggests that in the majority staff receive the learning and development opportunities needed. The Quality Assurance and Training Manager seeks feedback on training provided and suggestions for future training required. Professional staff are able to avail of a range of practical, specific and accredited training. Corporate and administrative staff benefit from the combination of an annual away day as well as an annual training event.

**Professional Staff**

All social work staff are expected to comply with the requirements of the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) which requires 90 hours Continuous Professional Development (CPD) within each three year registration period. Given that Guardians are experienced social workers working in a highly complex area of the profession, the Agency supports the
view that 30 hours CPD per annum is the minimum requirement and encourages staff to fully evidence their total CPD hours, thereby demonstrating to the Council and others the full extent of training within NIGALA. Further NISCC has in place the *Northern Ireland Post Qualifying Framework* for social work staff which provides opportunity for achievement of professional recognition within social work.

The *Personal Social Services (PSS) Development and Training Strategy 2006 - 2016* intends to meet the development and training needs of all social services employees from the point of entry into the workforce and throughout their careers. The priorities outlined in this strategy are:

- Leadership and Management
- Safety and Accountability
- Flexibility and Skills
- Motivation and Confidence
- Working in Partnership
- Continuous Improvement

Further the *Northern Ireland Social Work Strategy 2012-2022* asserts ten strategic priorities to strengthen the workforce. These priorities fall into three overarching categories:

- Strengthening the Capacity of the Workforce
- Improving Social Work Services
- Building Leadership and Trust

This strategy recognises that Northern Ireland is a post conflict society where social workers need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and expertise to help those who have experienced trauma in their life; they need to understand the legal frameworks and be culturally competent.

The aims of all these strategic documents can be applied to all staff within the agency including those who provide support functions to social services staff to fulfil the Agency’s Mission Statement.
Corporate and Administrative Staff

Corporate and Administrative Staff are not only encouraged to undertake CPD to enhance their own learning and progression, but also to enrich their contribution to the growth and development of the Agency. Whilst there is not a minimum required amount of CPD for corporate and administrative staff, the Agency encourages the active pursuit of learning and development opportunities reflective of career and goals as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). CIPD reported that in 2013 the median number of training hours employees received was 25 hours per year, a figure which the Agency encourages senior corporate staff to use as a benchmark.

The Healthcare Leadership Model is an important new model which can inform the development needs of all health and social care staff and to promote leadership at all levels. The model has been designed to promote understanding of how leadership behaviours can affect the culture and climate within which health and social care staff work. The Healthcare Leadership Model is made up of nine ‘leadership dimensions’, all of which are important in an individual’s leadership role. However, the type of job they have, the needs of the people they work with, and the context of their role within their organisation will all affect which dimensions are most important for them to use and develop.

The Agency

It is important that learning and development undertaken by Agency staff has a positive and tangible impact on the business of NIGALA. As such this strategy has been designed to assist in the delivery of the Agency’s five key themes as laid out in the 2014/2015 business plan:

- Compliance with Legislation and Guidance
- Efficient use of Resources
- Children at the Center of the NIGALA Decision Making Process
- Valuing Staff and Promoting Learning
- Delivery of Quality Service to Agreed Standards
**Strategy Aim**

The aim of the Learning and Development Strategy is to equip all staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and values pertaining to their role and to ensure that all training activities advance the goal of providing the best possible service to the children and young people with whom the Agency works. Further the strategy aims to ensure that the learning and development activities within the Agency relate to the wider context which may impact on staff and services.

**Responsibility for Learning and Development**

**The Individual**

It is the responsibility of each individual to take ownership of their own learning and development and to suitably apply new skills and knowledge to their job role. Individuals will be treated as adult learners and should therefore ensure that learning and development undertaken is relevant, timely and manageable. It is the responsibility of the individual to maintain a record of their own training and development.

**Line Management**

The line manager/case coordinator must approve attendance at all learning and development interventions. As such the line manager should ensure that all interventions are appropriate and produce tangible outcomes for both the individual and the organisation.

**Senior Management**

Senior management has a responsibility to state the aims and purposes of learning. Further they also have the responsibility to encourage and provide support to individuals undertaking learning within the organisation. This support may be through the allocation of funding, time or other resources as appropriate to each situation.
**Training Reference Group**

The Training Reference Group is responsible for identifying current and emergent issues relevant to NIGALA and any impact that these may have on staff’s learning and development needs. The Training Reference Group also has the responsibility to review requests for external development and support.

**Learning and Development Interventions**

Requirements for learning and development within the Agency have been identified in three key areas; the organisation, the team and the individual. The Agency has identified a number of learning and development interventions within each of these areas to aid enhancement and targeting of skills, knowledge and competencies.

The interventions set out below have been informed by the Agency’s training needs analysis, appraisals analysis and independently facilitated workshops.

**Organisational Development**

**Knowledge Exchange**

One of the business objectives in the Agency’s 2014/15 Business Plan is to:

‘Establish a system of information sharing and practice wisdom and experience across the HSC bodies and stakeholder group which informs service development’.

In order to fulfil that objective the Agency will:

- Make relevant knowledge, information and best practice available for viewing on the new *HSC Knowledge Exchange*
- Provide a presence at relevant regional and UK wide conferences
- Engage in a two-way sharing of knowledge with The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) to understand the UK environment and any impact that changes or improvements may have on NIGALA
Innovation and Improvement

One of the Agency’s core values is to ensure that:

‘Systems are in place to provide assurance on standards and enable continuous quality improvement across the organisation’

Further in order to deliver on two of the five strategic themes (Efficient use of Resources, Delivery of Quality Service to Agreed Standards) NIGALA will be open to innovation and improvement throughout the organisation what will enable the Agency to meet its mission within the wide and diverse aforementioned health and social care context.

Quality 2020 recommends that each HSC organisation produce an annual quality report and be responsible for making improvements year-on-year. NIGALA’S Annual Quality Report 2014/2015 outlines the next steps for the Agency under five main headings:

- Transforming the culture
- Strengthening the workforce
- Measuring the improvement
- Raising the standards
- Integrating the care

Growing a Culture of Leadership

Leadership is not limited to staff who are in specific management or traditional leader roles, leadership can be demonstrated by anyone within NIGALA through the behaviors expected of leaders as identified within the Agency’s Leadership and Management Framework. This framework outlines NIGALA’s key leadership dimensions and provides guidance on the behaviours expected to embody those dimensions. Understanding and enacting these behaviours will lead to the growing culture of leadership at all levels of the Agency.

Career Progression and Succession Planning

A gap has been identified within the Agency in relation to career progression and succession planning due to the nature of its flat structure. To address this gap the Agency will
implement a succession planning approach for staff to ensure opportunities for career progression which will allow the Agency to retain highly skilled workers. This will begin with the Agency’s review of its structure in 2014/15.

**Interest Inventories**

In order to retain highly skilled and professional employees it will be essential to develop a strategy for identifying and meeting the changing needs of our staff. By asking individuals what projects they might like to work on, what skills they would like to develop and what teams/individuals they would like to work with, staff will become more stimulated and motived therefore maximising productivity levels.

**Team Development**

**Creating a team culture**

NIGALA encourages a culture of team working within the Agency where individuals use their talents and skills to work collaboratively with others to achieve a common purpose. Creating a team culture will lead to staff feeling trusted and empowered to make their own decisions therefore impacting the direction and aims of the organisation. The Agency has reviewed the effectiveness of the Senior Management Team and has an action plan for improvement which will be progressed in 2014/15.

**Personal Development**

**Induction**

Every staff member should receive a formal induction to the Agency upon commencing employment. The induction will provide the new start with a comprehensive introduction to the Agency, including governance and management structure, the Agency’s mission statement, values and principles as well as the strategic objectives for the future. The induction should cover all professional standards which relate to the post in line with *NISCC Induction Standards 2007*. Finally the induction should direct the new start towards resources for further support and development as required. The induction will be delivered
using a blended learning format which includes face-to-face learning, e-learning, social learning and coaching. This blended approach will ensure the induction is both effective and efficient.

**Continuous Professional Development Record**

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) will be a requirement for all staff with the responsibility placed firmly with the individual to identify their own learning requirements throughout the year. The individual will be required to have completed a CPD record which should include evidence of personal reflection on activities undertaken and evidence that he/she will act differently as a result of reflecting on that experience.

Whilst the Quality Assurance and Training Manager will collate the formal Agency training events on the Staff Development Management System (SDMS), the responsibility of the log will remain with the individual and be integrated within the appraisal process.

**Professional Development Groups**

The Agency has introduced a Professional Development Framework for the professional social work workforce within NIGALA. This framework aims to:

- Drive up performance and knowledge exchange
- Ensure a process of structured peer support which drives the quality of the work of Guardians
- Establish a network of Guardians as trained internal coaches
- Provide for a coaching skills development programme for managers which will offer grounding in coaching skills that will enhance performance improvement
- Enable access to a network of executive coaches for senior staff

**Continual Development Groups**

The Agency will introduce a formal continual development process for corporate and administrative staff. This will bring together a group of people with varied levels of skills and experience to analyse an actual work issue and develop an action plan on behalf of NIGALA.
This will aim to increase skill base, develops departmental relationship, and improves communication skills. Continual Development Groups will be facilitated by a qualified and neutral professional.

**Training**

A range of training programmes will be made accessible to staff including but not limited to:

- Mandatory organisational training
- Professional and policy based training
- Leadership and management development
- Innovation and service improvement
- Customer care skills
- Personal skills such as resilience and influencing
- Career advancement skills

Attendance at a training course is subject to the approval of a line manager.

**Appraisals**

NIGALA has recently introduced a new Appraisal Policy. Commitment will be given to ensure that appraisal reviews are completed at set intervals for every individual. Performance appraisal audits will be completed to ensure consistency and 100% target achieved. For further information please see the Agency’s ‘Personal Performance Appraisal Scheme’ policy.

**Further Education**

NIGALA wishes to encourage employed staff to undertake training and educational development which is linked to its overall Mission, is directly related to the achievement of its objectives and is relevant to individuals’ present or immediately foreseeable work responsibilities. For more information please see the ‘Post Entry Training, Development and Education’ policy.
Evaluation

Evaluation of Learning

Phillips and Phillips\textsuperscript{w} believe that training interventions should be evaluated over five levels to ascertain the benefits for all stakeholders and to ensure on-going value is being added. These levels are:

<table>
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<th>Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction and Satisfaction</td>
<td>Measures participants’ reaction to the programme and stakeholder satisfaction with the programme and the planned implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Measures skills, knowledge or attitude changes related to the programme and implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application and Implementation</td>
<td>Measures changes in behaviour on the job and specific application and implementation of the programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Impact</td>
<td>Measures business impact changes related to the programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return on Investment</td>
<td>Compares the monetary value of the business impact with the costs for the programme</td>
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The agency will ensure that all learning and development interactions are evaluated as appropriate against the above levels to allow for a comprehensive understanding of the value of the learning provided and to maximise opportunities for future learning which may positively impact the Agency’s development.

Evaluation Purpose

Evaluation of learning and development interventions is beneficial for both the organisation and the staff to ensure that the on-going approach is appropriate and up to date.

Benefits for the Agency:

- Gain a clearer understanding of the ways in which learning is contributing to organisational success
- Use this information to achieve better value from the investment made in learning
- Make better use of learning and human capital resources

**Benefits for the Individual**
- Provide greater clarity about the value that learning and training have for the Agency
- Identify clear ideas to ensure alignment between learning and the organisation’s strategic priorities
- Prioritise ideas focusing on action to establish ways of assessing and reporting on the value of learning and training

**Evaluation of the NIGALA Learning and Development Strategy**
This strategy has been developed for the period of 2014 – 2016. In 2016 the Agency will seek to have an independent review of this strategy carried out to confirm that it has met its stated purpose and aim, its efficiency and effectiveness, and to inform the priorities for the Agency’s next learning and development strategy.
Appendix A
## Appendix B

### Identified Actions

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<td>1. Review and update NIGALA’s Training Policy</td>
<td>Quality Assurance and Training Manager</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Review and update NIGALA’s Post Entry Training, Development and Education Policy</td>
<td>Quality Assurance and Training Manager</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Undertake a review of the staffing structure within NIGALA</td>
<td>Chief Executive supported by SMT</td>
<td>March 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Analysis of baseline knowledge and skills audit and map actions to the Learning and Development Strategy</td>
<td>Quality Assurance and Training Manager</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Evaluation of Board and SMT team effectiveness days to determine if this should be rolled out further</td>
<td>Chief Executive supported by SMT</td>
<td>December 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. CIPD Learning and Talent Development Annual Survey Report 2013
3. NIGALA Business Plan 2014/2015